

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 127116

NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAIRO 13115 SENT ACTION SECSTATE 17 MAY 78

QUOTE S E C R E T CAIRO 13115

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV PEPR PBOR EG US XF
SUBJECT: MEMORANDUM ON EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL RE
WEST BANK/GAZA

REF: PARA 13, CAIRO 13091

1. AS REPORTED REFTEL, SADAT TOLD ME EARLIER TODAY THAT
HE HAD INSTRUCTED FONMIN KAMEL TO GIVE US TWO DOCUMENTS:
ONE, AN "ELABORATION" OF THE LAST EGYPTIAN COUNTER-
PROPOSAL ON THE WEST BANK/GAZA AND THE OTHER A NEW PRO-
POSAL BASED ON HIS LATEST IDEAS. THESE DOCUMENTS WERE
TO BE PROVIDED TO ME THIS EVENING. LATE THIS EVENING

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AHMED MAHER DID INDEED BRING TO THE EMBASSY TWO DOCUMENTS.
THE FIRST, HOWEVER, RATHER THAN BEING AN ELABORATION OF
THE EARLIER EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL, IS A MEMORANDUM TO
US INDICATING IN EFFECT THAT GOE DOES NOT FEEL IN A
POSITION TO ELABORATE ON THAT PROPOSAL. I SUBSEQUENTLY
TALKED TO FONMIN KAMEL, WHO CONFIRMED THAT GOE DID NOT
SEE HOW IT COULD ALTER ITS EARLIER COUNTERPROPOSAL ON

WEST BANK/GAZA IN ABSENCE SOME POSITIVE ISRAELI RESPONSE TO WHAT FUTURE OF THOSE AREAS WOULD LOOK LIKE AFTER FIVE-YEAR TRANSITIONAL PERIOD. TEXT OF EGYPTIAN MEMORANDUM FOLLOWS:

2. QUOTE: PRESIDENT SADAT IS GRATIFIED BY YOUR ASSURANCE THAT NEITHER PRESIDENT CARTER NOR SECRETARY VANCE SAID ANYTHING TO THE ISRAELIS WHICH WOULD IN ANY WAY MEAN A CHANGE IN THE U.S. POLICY. AS PRESIDENT SADAT POINTED OUT IN RECENT COMMUNICATIONS, IT IS IMPERATIVE AT THIS CRUCIAL JUNCTION, THAT PRIME MINISTER BEGIN GETS THE UNMISTAKABLE MESSAGE THAT THE UNITED STATES IS NOT WAVERING. THE SUCCESS OF OUR JOINT PEACE EFFORTS DEPENDS LARGELY ON THE CLARITY OF THIS IMPRESSION IN THE MINDS OF THE ISRAELIS.

AS PRESIDENT CARTER AND SECRETARY VANCE WILL KNOW, PRIME MINISTER BEGIN IS APT TO MISINTERPRET ANY SOFTENING OF THE AMERICAN POSITIONS AS AN ACQUIESCENCE TO HIS RIGID CONCEPTS WHICH DO NOT CONSTITUTE A VALID BASIS FOR MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATIONS. IN VIEW OF THAT, A FIRM STAND BY THE U.S. WOULD CERTAINLY HELP STIMULATE PROGRESS TOWARDS PEACE.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE TWO QUESTIONS YOU ADRESSED (SIC) TO THE ISRAELI SIDE ARE BOTH PERTINENT AND HELPFUL. THE SECRET

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ISRAELI RESPONSE WILL REVEAL WHETHER OR NOT THEY ENVISAGE A FINAL SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION. A NEGATIVE REPLY TO THE FIRST QUESTION WOULD MEAN THAT THEY CONCEIVE THE SO-CALLED SELF-RULE PLAN AS A PERPETUAL ARRANGEMENT. IN OTHER WORDS, IT WOULD BE THE END OF THE ROAD SO FAR AS THE ISRAELIS ARE CONCERNED.

PRESIDENT SADAT AGREES WITH YOUR VIEW THAT AN ANSWER TO THE FOUR QUESTIONS PUT FORWARD BY DAYAN HINGES UPON A POSITIVE ISRAELI REPLY TO THE QUESTIONS YOU DIRECTED TO THEM. CERTAINLY WE CAN CONSULT TOGETHER ON THESE POINTS IN THE USUAL OPEN-MINDED SPIRIT THAT CHARACTERIZES OUR DEALINGS. WITH RESPECT TO OUR DRAFT PROPOSAL ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION, WE WERE KEEN TO MAKE IT AS DETAILED AND COMPREHENSIVE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. AS PRESIDENT SADAT HAS POINTED OUT REPEATEDLY THERE IS A CERTAIN LIMIT BEYOND WHICH WE CANNOT GO IN DISCUSSING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION IN THE ABSENCE OF OTHER ARAB PARTIES. IT IS NOT IN THE INTEREST OF A JUST NEGOTIATE "ON BEHALF OF OTHER PARTIES". WE BELIEVE THAT THE PROPER ROLE FOR US TO PLAY IS TO TRY TO LAY THE AGREEMENT ON A SET OF PRINCIPLES THAT WOULD FACILITATE

THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS. THIS IS ALSO NEEDED FOR ENCOURAGING WILLING ARAB PARTIES, PARTICULARLY JORDAN TO JOIN IN. YOU ARE AWARE THAT AN ISRAELI ACCEPTANCE OF CARRYING OUT THEIR OBLIGATION TO WITHDRAW FROM OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES IS THE CORNERSTONE FOR A BREAKTHROUGH IN THIS CONNECTION.

UNDOUBTEDLY, PRESIDENT CARTER AND SECRETARY VANCE REALIZE THAT ANY DRAFT PROPOSAL OF THIS NATURE HAS TO CONTAIN CERTAIN LEGAL ELEMENTS. HOWEVER, WE FEEL THAT OUR LAST DRAFT IS NOT A "LEGALISTIC DOCUMENT" THAT SACRIFICES THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS FOR OVEREMPHASIS ON LEGAL TECHNICALITIES. OUR TARGET IS TO FIND A WORKABLE FORMULA WHICH IS LIKELY TO LEAD TO A SETTLEMENT. YOU WILL RECALL
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THAT PRESIDENT SADAT INSISTED AS EARLY AS A YEAR AGO ON BYPASSING PROCEDURES AND FORMALITIES IN FAVOR OF REACHING AN AGREEMENT ON SUBSTANCE. YOU WILL RECALL ALSO THAT THE BEGIN PROPOSAL FOR THE WEST BANK AND GAZA WAS ACTUALLY A LABYRINTH OF LEGAL DETAILS THAT WENT AS FAR AS SETTING THE RULES FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR VOTING FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL, THE DATE FOR THE CONVENING OF THE COUNCIL'S FIRST SESSION, AND SO ON.

IN RESPONSE TO THE U.S. SUGGESTION, WE ELABORATED ON THE PROVISIONS OF THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD WITH A VIEW TO MEETING THE LEGITIMATE (ISRAELI) CONCERN OVER SECURITY AND PEACEFUL TRANSFORMATION FROM THE STATUS QUO TO THE FINAL SETTLEMENT. THE DRAFT CONTAINS STIPULATIONS GUARANTEEING AN ORDERLY AND PEACEFUL MECHANISM. ADEQUATE REFERENCE WAS MADE TO THE LINK WITH JORDAN. PROVISIONS RELATED TO JERUSALEM (WERE) QUITE CLEAR ON SUCH MATTERS AS THE FREE EXERCISE OF WORSHIP, FREEDOM OF ACCESS (TO) VISIT AND TRANSIT TO THE HOLY PLACES. THIS WAS DESIGNED TO ALLAY THE FEARS OF THOSE WHO DREAD THE PROSPECTS OF REINSTITUTING RESTRICTIONS AND BARRIERS WITHIN THE CITY.

IN ALL CANDOR WE BELIEVE THAT THE DRAFT IS NOT LIKELY ON BALANCE TO STRENGTHEN THE HANDS OF THE HARDLINERS IN ISRAEL. ITS OVERALL EMPHASIS IS APT TO GENERATE A FAVORABLE REACTION FROM THE PEACE ADVOCATES INSIDE ISRAEL, WHICH IS ONE OF OUR GOALS.

WE MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT WE HAVE A CONSTITUENCY TOO. MUCH OF WHAT WAS EMBODIED IN THE DRAFT IS LIKELY TO CAUSE CONTROVERSY IN THE MODERATE FACTION ON THE ARAB SIDE. THIS IS A FACTOR WE CANNOT NEGLECT OR UNDERESTIMATE.

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AT ANY RATE, WE WILL WAIT, WITH INTEREST WHAT DEVELOPS IN THE DAYS TO COME. A POSITIVE ISRAELI REPLY TO THE TWO QUESTIONS WOULD CONSTITUTE A HOPEFUL SIGN. THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT THE ARAB PICTURE WOULD REGISTER AN IMPROVEMENT. PRESIDENT SADAT IS CONFIDENT THAT THROUGH OUR CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION OF OUR MOVES WE CAN OVERCOME THE REMAINING OBSTACLES AND PUT THE AREA ON THE THRESHOLD OF PEACE. UNQUOTE.

3. COMMENT: KAMEL'S MEMORANDUM IS NOT WHAT SADAT LED ME TO BELIEVE WOULD BE FORTHCOMING. CLEARLY, HOWEVER, AS HE SO OFTEN DOES, SADAT LEFT DETAILS TO BE WORKED OUT BY KAMEL AND MFA AND THIS IS AS FAR KAMEL FELT PREPARED TO GO.

4. SECOND GOE DOCUMENT FOLLOWS BY SEPTTEL.

5. DEPT MAY WISH PASS THIS MESSAGE TO TEL AVIV FOR INFO. EILTS
UNQUOTE VANCE

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NNN

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